

CLASSIFICATION OFFICE DECISION

Title of publication: I Spit On Your Grave

Other known title(s): I Spit On Your Grave 2010

OFLC ref: 1100104.000

Medium: DVD

Distributor: Madman Entertainment

Director: Steven R. Monroe

Producer: Lisa Hansen
Paul Hertzberg

Country of origin: United States

Language: English

Applicant: Film & Video Labelling Body

Classification:	Objectionable.
------------------------	----------------

Excisions: No excisions recommended

Descriptive note: None

Display conditions: None

Date of entry in Register: 22 March 2011

Date of direction to issue a label: No direction to issue a label has been issued

	Components	Running time
Menu:	Play Scene Selections Set Up Special Features	
Feature(s):	I Spit On Your Grave	108:09
Timed component(s):	The Revenge Of Jennifer Hills: Remaking A Cult Icon Deleted Scenes	16:25 11:44

	Teaser Trailer	1:01
	Theatrical Trailer	1:23
	Theatrical Trailer #2	1:42
Untimed component(s):	Radio Spot Commentary Notices	
Total running time:		140:24

Summary of reasons for decision:

The DVD *I Spit On Your Grave* is deemed objectionable because it tends to promote and support the use of violence to compel any person to submit to sexual conduct. It also tends to promote and support acts of torture and the infliction of extreme violence and extreme cruelty.

The DVD contains the 2010 remake of the horror exploitation feature *I Spit On Your Grave*. The feature contains long and realistic scenes showing the brutal terrorisation and rape of a woman by a group of men. Later scenes show her wreak implausible but sadistic vengeance against her tormentors. In the Classification Office's view, the material tends to encourage attitudes that contribute to sexual violence, torture by terror and other extremes of cruelty and violence, particularly against women. The treatment of the woman before she is raped, in particular, is an all-too-plausible and realistic version of the kind of abuse meted out to many women. There is minimal effort to explain the sadistic behaviour of the male characters.

There will be many viewers who find these scenes distressing and repugnant. However, several elements argue against a conclusion that the material will affect all viewers in this way. The terrorisation and rape of a woman is unapologetically presented as entertainment. The length of the scenes and their gratuitous focus on Jennifer's suffering offer maximum opportunity for misogynistic pleasure. Viewers are repeatedly invited to share the point of view of the rapists and are therefore placed in the position of prurient voyeurs. Some viewers may well identify with male dominance and power, and echo the men's enjoyment of the woman's terror and humiliation. This result is made even more likely by the feature's eroticisation of sexual violence. Sexualised images abound. There are numerous titillating glimpses of nudity or partial nudity. The terrorisation of the woman includes images that are dwelt on in pornographic detail, including forcible fellatio with a gun. The rapes themselves will be arousing for some viewers. All of these factors invite viewers to become complicit in events and to take vicarious pleasure in the men's misogyny and the woman's abject fear and debasement.

Whereas the brutalisation of the woman is chillingly realistic, her revenge is a series of grotesque and implausible horror set-pieces. This series of deaths is different in tone from the long scenes of humiliation and rape seen earlier. Nevertheless, the results are bloody and horrific. Of particular concern is the sadism of the woman's vengeance and the way that viewers are invited to cheer her on: the men are painted as so despicable that viewers are encouraged to enjoy seeing them get what they deserve in scenarios taken to horrific extremes. However, most viewers will be well aware that what they are watching is fantasy and that the reality is a long and difficult pursuit of justice through the legal system.

The Classification Office has considered the effects of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 on the application of the classification criteria. The classification of this publication interferes with the freedom of expression, but this is an outcome that is consistent with Parliament's intention that publications falling under s3(2) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 are deemed to be objectionable. The Classification Office has considered whether a different classification might be possible if excisions were made. However, the material that causes the DVD's tendency to promote and support sexual violence and other violence and

cruelty against women is extensive. To remove the worst parts too many excisions would be required and it is arguable whether these would remove the problematic messages underlying this film. Therefore excisions are not considered viable in this instance.